

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

AID-05 PC-01 /088 W

-----291619Z 052877 /44

O 291420Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7854

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 5388

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, RH, US, UK

SUBJ: SITHOLE'S VIEWS ON U.S. ROLE IN CONSTITUTIONAL  
CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY: REV. NDABANINGI SITHOLE CALLED ON CHARGE ON  
APRIL 29 TO OFFER HIS CURRENT THINKING ON CONSTITUTIONAL  
CONFERENCE AND OTHER RHODESIA ISSUES. MAIN POINT HE WANTED  
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CONVEYED TO U.S. GOVERNMENT WAS THAT CONTINUED U.S. INVOLVE-  
MENT IN RHODESIA SETTLEMENT IS WELCOMED AND ESSENTIAL, BUT  
THAT U.S. SHOULD BE PRESENT "IN THE WINGS" OR AS AN OBSERVER  
AT CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE, NOT AS CO-CHAIRMAN OR PART-  
ICIPATING DELEGATE. HE JUSTIFIED THIS POSITION ON GROUNDS  
THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO EXCLUDE SOVIETS, CHINESE AND  
FRONT LINE STATES IF U.S. WERE A FULL PARTICIPANT. END

SUMMARY.

2. SITHOLE ARRIVED NAIROBI APRIL 28 AND PLANS TO CONTINUE TO MALAWI ON MAY 1, THENCE TO ACCRA. HE IS SEEING ATTORNEY GENERAL NJONJO IN KENYA. AT HIS REQUEST, CHARGE RECEIVED HIM AND HIS ADVISER NOEL MUKONO FOR HALF HOUR ON APRIL 29.

3. SITHOLE ALLUDED TO PREVIOUS CALLS ON AMERICAN DIPLOMATS IN OTHER CAPITALS AND SAID HE WELCOMED OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT VIEWS TO U.S. SUBJECT HE WANTED TO DISCUSS ON THIS OCCASION WAS U.S. ROLE IN RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT, SPECIFICALLY IN CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE. HE NAMED THREE REASONS WHY U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN SETTLEMENT DESIRABLE AND NECESSARY: (1) UK HAD LOST CONTROL OF RHODESIA WHEN IT RENOUNCED USE OF FORCE, AND THIS CONTINUED TO WEAKEN ITS EFFORTS TO SOLVE PROBLEM. HE HAD TOLD DR. OWEN AS MUCH, ALTHOUGH HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WELCOMED ANY NEW IDEAS OR LEADERSHIP BRITAIN COULD BRING TO RESUMED SETTLEMENT EFFORT. (2) U.S. HAS GREATEST ABILITY TO EXERT PRESSURE ON SOUTH AFRICA, WHICH IN TURN IS KEY SUPPORTER OF SMITH. FOR EXAMPLE, U.S. IS "CONNECTED WITH OIL COMPANIES" WHO SUPPLY RHODESIA. (3) MANY CITIZENS OF ZIMBABWE FEEL THREATENED BY SOVIET AND CUBAN "MONKEYING AROUND" IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, SINCE THEY DO NOT WANT RHODESIA TO GO THE WAY OF ANGOLA. U.S. PRESSURE ON SMITH FOR AN EARLY SETTLEMENT IS ONLY WAY OF HEADING OFF DEEPER INVOLVEMENT BY SOVIETS AND THEIR FRIENDS.

4. SITHOLE EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS NOT URGING THE U.S. TO  
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STAY ALOOF FROM CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE. ON THE CONTRARY, HE WANTED U.S. TO REMAIN INVOLVED. BUT IF U.S. PROPOSES TO CO-CHAIR CONFERENCE OR TO BE PARTICIPATING DELEGATE, IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT IN TERMS OF CREDIBILITY WITH ZIMBABWEAN PEOPLE FOR ANY LEADER TO REJECT SIMILAR PARTICIPATION BY SOVIETS, PRC AND FRONT LINE STATES. IN THIS CONTEXT, SITHOLE SAID ZANU DID NOT WISH TO BE SEEN AS ANYONE'S PUPPET.

5. CHARGE ASKED HOW SITHOLE SAW PROSPECTS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE. HE REPLIED THAT HE FAVORED CONVENING OF CONFERENCE, AND HE BELIEVED "EVERYBODY" WANTED SETTLEMENT -- WHITED, AFRICANS AND FRONT LINE STATES. HE MADE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT "EVERYONE" DID NOT INCLUDE PATRIOTIC FRONT, WHICH HE WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO DISPARAGE. HE CHARGED THAT PATRIOTIC FRONT STRATEGY WAS TO PROLONG FIGHTING UNTIL THEY COULD SEIZE CONTROL BY FORCE OF ARMS. HE CHARGED THAT PATRIOTIC FRONT HAD ABSOLUTELY NO FOLLOWING INSIDE RHODESIA-- ONLY ZANU, ZAPU AND ANC HAD SUCH SUPPORT. IN RESPONSE TO FURTHER PROBING BY CHARGE, SITHOLE INDICATED THAT HE FELT

NKOMO WAS PROBABLY NOT UNWILLING TO ATTEND CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE. ONLY MUGABE WAS TRYING TO RAISE OBSTACLES.

6. SITHOLE AGREED WITH CHARGE THAT MACHEL AND NYERERE HAD IDEOLOGICAL REASONS FOR SUPPORTING NKOMO AND PATRIOTIC FRONT. HE FELT THAT KAUNDA'S SUPPORT WAS BASED ON LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN HIM AND NKOMO. SITHOLE ASSERTED THAT DESPITE THIS FRONT-LINE SUPPORT, NKOMO WAS REJECTED INSIDE RHODESIA, AND ONLY HOPE OF FRONT LINE STATES WAS THAT NKOMO MIGHT PREVAIL IF HE HAD ENOUGH FORCE AT HIS DISPOSAL.

7. CHARGE ASKED WHETHER SITHOLE SAW ANY CHANGE IN SMITH'S POSITION RECENTLY. SITHOLE ANSWERED BY SAYING HE FELT SMITH HAD BEEN PREOCCUPIED FOR PAST 13 MONTHS WITH A SUBTLE EXERCISE OF APPEARING TO SEEK WAYS TO TRANSFER POWER TO THE MAJORITY WHILE IN FACT RETAINING ACTUAL POWER FOR HIM-  
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SELF. THIS WAS WHY IT WAS SO IMPORTANT FOR U.S. TO USE ITS INFLUENCE TO BRING PRESSURE ON SMITH, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE THROUGH VORSTER.  
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